

From the Director



Measuring Your Meeting Success

As you look at the possibility of planning and hosting a meeting, you should ask at least initially, "Why do we need this meeting?" If you proceed with the meeting, a second question should be answered at the conclusion: "Did the meeting satisfy the answer to the first question?"

Regardless of the size of your proposed meeting, it is important to carefully analyze the meeting's purpose and potential outcomes. Ask yourself if the objectives add value to the meeting's purpose. The first step in this process is to determine the meeting's potential value or return on investment (ROI). While the obvious focus on value may lead you to examine the final budget, you should also consider two other factors:

- **Learning and educational value:** Was the meeting or training relevant, interesting, and timely for the attendees?
- **Customer needs:** Were attendees' needs met and were they satisfied

Measuring *continued*

Trends in the Meeting World Industry

Professional Development versus Shrinking Budgets

Although most of us are dealing with reduced budgets, it remains essential to provide professional development opportunities for all employees, at all levels in our organizations. Professional development pays dividends in providing employees with networking opportunities and training in areas of expertise, while refreshing employees with a break from the routine. There are ways to continue providing a satisfactory level of professional development opportunities, even as budget levels decrease.

Travel expenses can devour funds, especially as these costs continue to rise. Look at travel savings by finding regional meetings and conferences, rather than sending employees to national-level conferences. For smaller groups, videoconferencing offers an affordable alternative to traveling to meeting sites. With the advanced technology

Purdue has available, it is easy to plan videoconferencing events here on our campus.

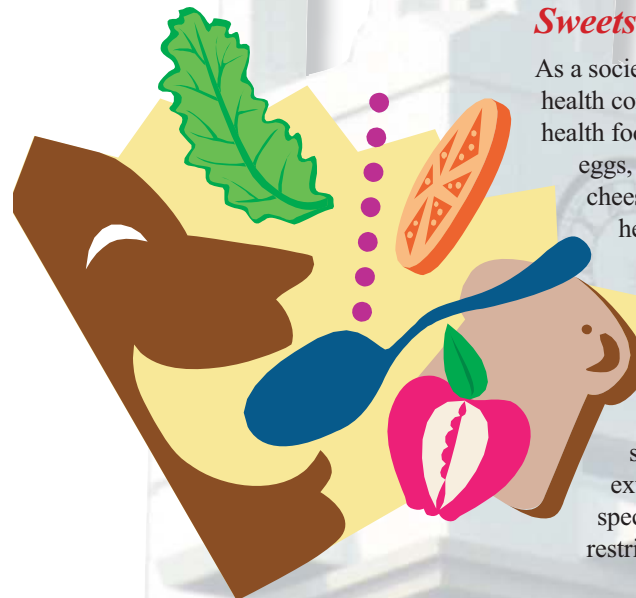


There are many professional development opportunities offered on campus by Conferences; ITaP provides a range of computer training classes; and Human Resources sponsors numerous wellness events. Our Conferences Web site, www.conf.purdue.edu, is an excellent resource for you to find professional development opportunities in your area.

There are also opportunities to bolster your department's budget by hosting conferences of your professional associations and organizations. To have our office contact your professional organization about bringing a conference to Purdue's campus, please contact Susan Xioufaridou. She will be glad to give you cost estimates and check the availability of facilities.

Sweets are Out

As a society we are becoming increasingly health conscious. Sweets are out and health foods are in. You may see more eggs, granola bars, fruit displays, cheese trays, and yogurt as more healthy options for morning and afternoon deliveries. When choosing banquet menus, in addition to healthy alternatives, consider the area's seasonal and regional specialties, which can add sparkle to your menu at no extra charge. Also keep in mind special dietary needs and religious restrictions when planning menus.

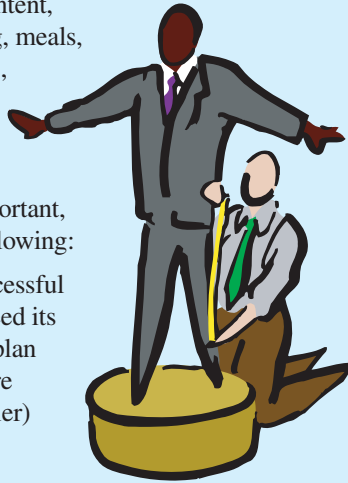


Trends *continues*

Measuring Success *continued*

that their expectations were met? These questions should consider not only program content, but also site selection, lodging, meals, transportation, meeting rooms, and special events.

Traditionally, though, we focus meeting success on the bottom line, the ROI. Although this is important, you need to also remember the following:



- If your meeting is judged successful is only because it did not exceed its budget, you may be asked to plan future meetings that offer more for the same (or an even smaller) budget.
- If the meeting comes in over, or under budget, it is important to be able to articulate the reasons why you missed the target budget. Be prepared to show that budget items were appropriate and anticipated.

Other means of measuring meeting success include:

- **Evaluations:** Create a specific and comment-oriented evaluation form for attendees, and then use the evaluation information when planning your next meeting.
- **Attendee focus groups:** Conduct pre- and post-conference focus groups, based on attendees' personal expectations and outcomes.
- **Participation:** Are attendee numbers higher or lower than in previous years?
- **Testimonials:** Attendees can be asked to comment on how the program helped them in their jobs. This information should be solicited several weeks after the meeting, so attendees have sufficient time to reflect on the meeting. These testimonials can be very effective in mailings to promote future meeting.

As you try to judge and justify the ROI on your meeting investment, look at both the tangible and intangible measures of the meeting. Make changes as needed and, whatever the topic, be proactive when planning your next meeting. You can then begin to develop the expectations and desired outcomes for your next successful meeting.

Paul Horngren, CMP
Director, Purdue University
Conference Division



Trends *continued*

Tips for your Conference Meals

The first event of your conference should be one where networking can take place. An opening night reception gives conferees the opportunity to unwind, meet new members of the organization, and acquaint themselves with old friends from other areas. Make the event very casual, as many attendees will have been traveling and will want to relax.

Breakfast should be bright and cheery in presentation. The afternoon break should renew the conferees' energy and help them focus on the conference.

If conferees are on their own for lunch, be sure to allow enough time and recommend suitable restaurants within walking distance, for those who do not have transportation.

The closing event should be a more formal meal, with time for a guest speaker or awards presentations.



Products and Services Spotlight

Closeout Special

A timeless, practical Purdue keepsake, featuring the classic Purdue griffin these one inch three ringed binders sell for only \$1.50 each, contact Carol Coddington at 494-0281 for more information.



What do I do first?

If you are interested in hosting an event on or off campus, contact:



Susan Xioufaridou
Sales Coordinator
susanx@purdue.edu
765-496-6205
800-955-6385